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DE RUEHTM #0035 0121804

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FM AMCONSUL TIJUANA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9724

RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE 6672

INFO RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE

RUEHTM/AMCONSUL TIJUANA 2520

UNCLAS TIJUANA 000035

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR DS/IP/WHA, DS/TIA/PII, AND MEXICO CITY FOR RSO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC KCRM PINS SNAR MX CASC

SUBJECT: MAJOR DEVELOPMENT IN EFFORTS TO COMBAT CARTEL VIOLENCE:
ARREST OF KINGPIN 'EL TEO' - EDUARDO TEODORO GARCIA-SIMENTAL

REF: TIJUANA 1275

¶1. (SBU) Mexican authorities arrested Eduardo Teodoro GARCIA-Simental (alias 'El Teo') in a residence in La Paz, Baja California, Mexico at approximately 0500 hours on 01/12/2010. The arrest resulted from a joint operation planned by DEA, U.S. Marshal Service, and local authorities, as well as SSP Mexico City intelligence and tactical units. Simental is being transported to Mexico City for interview and processing.

BACKGROUND AND COMMENT:

¶2. (SBU) Eduardo Teodoro GARCIA-Simental was connected to the splintered ARELLANO-Felix (AFO) drug trafficking organization (DTO), before challenges for leadership beginning in 2006 led to turf wars and ongoing violence in Tijuana and other Baja California areas. Since then, El Teo has sought to take over the region, and his efforts have been marked by extreme violence, mutilation of bodies, pozoles (putting people in acid and cooking them in barrels), kidnappings, and the use of psychological tactics such as leaving 'narco-messages' on victims. El TEO had the backing of Joaquin GUZMAN-Loera and Ismael ZAMBADA-Garcia for at least the last year.

¶3. (SBU) This arrest constitutes a major blow to the DTO that has been responsible for the majority of kidnappings and murders in Tijuana over the past two years. Although El Teo's organization is losing a ruthless leader, past history suggests that a power struggle will now ensue in which lower-level cartel members will vie for the leadership position. Violence is likely to continue.

¶4. (SBU) This will be a major story in the regional media, so we expect attention will be focused on the U.S. role in this important arrest. Post EAC will convene this morning to discuss implications for the safety of Congen personnel and other Amcits, and to determine if changes are needed in the security profile of our post.

UNCLASSIFIED

KASHKETT